

TECHNICAL NOTES

WYOMING

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Biology No. 115

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Subject: RACCOON*

General

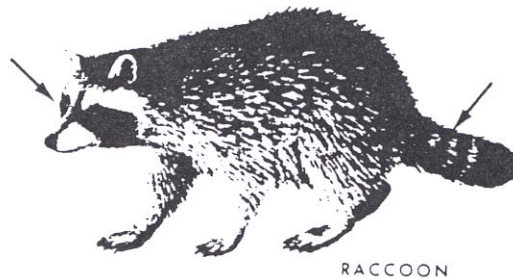
The raccoon (Procyon lotor) is a semiarboreal mammal most often associated with a deciduous treeland habitat, especially along streams and near lakes. Proximity to water appears to be an important factor in their habitat.

Food Requirements

The raccoon is omnivorous, and the locality and seasonal availability of food determine to a large extent what foods are eaten. Food utilized includes fish, birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, oysters, clams, crayfish, nuts, berries, and seeds. Corn, sorghum, and other cultivated crops are especially desirable.

Water Requirements

The raccoon requires sufficient amounts of water for drinking. Other studies found the average distance from areas utilized by raccoons to water to be 463.5 ft (140.5 m) and 409 ft (123.9 m) respectively. One mile (1.6 km) appeared to be the maximum distance raccoons traveled daily to satisfy their water requirements in Michigan.



RACCOON

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*Information taken from Ecoregion M3113 Handbook and Habitat Suitability Index Models, Wildlife Species Narratives (literature searches), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, various dates between 1978-1984.

Cover Requirements

Trees, crevices, and rocky bluffs provide escape cover. Large deciduous trees provide desirable denning sites for the raccoon.

Reproductive Requirements

Raccoons prefer to den in hollow trees, but will utilize ground dens when tree dens are not available. Ground dens may be made in fallen logs, crevices in rocky outcroppings, and old ground burrows of other animals. The number of den sites needed to support an average density of raccoons in Michigan was approximately two per 15 to 20 acres (6 to 8 ha). Higher densities of raccoons were found in areas containing four to six den sites per 15 to 20 acres.

Tree dens in Michigan and Minnesota were usually located in hollow deciduous trees with a dbh ranging from 15 to 37 in. (38.1 to 93.9 cm). The average dbh for denning trees in Michigan was approximately 28 in. (71.1 cm). Raccoon dens were from 5 to 65 ft (2.1 to 19.7 m) above the ground with an average den height of approximately 28 ft (8.5 m). The height of denning trees in Minnesota ranged from 52 to 74 ft (15.8 to 22.4 m) with an average tree height of 55 ft (16.7 m).

Special Habitat Requirements

Raccoons require tree dens for over-wintering as well as for denning.

Interspersion Requirements

Home range for the raccoon in a managed waterfowl marsh averaged 140 acres (56 ha) for adults and 30 acres (12 ha) for juveniles. One study found the home range of the raccoon in Michigan to be an area no More than 1 mi (1.6 km) in diameter. Raccoons prefer deciduous woodland habitats close to cultivated land.

Special Considerations

Raccoons in Colorado are frequently found in farming areas where trees for denning are present (Lechleitner 1969). Farm lands and the presence of cultivated crops can add greatly to the suitability of the habitat for raccoons (Caras 1967).